

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2024

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
House Committee on Education and the Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx,

As you are aware, under Secretary Miguel Cardona's leadership, the Department of Education (ED) has shown a troubling pattern of targeting Christian universities. Recent fines levied against institutions such as Grand Canyon University (GCU), Liberty University (LU), and Ashland University (AU) suggest a concerted effort to impose punitive measures on Christian institutions, raising concerns about religious discrimination and unequal application of regulations.

In October 2023, ED issued a record-setting \$37.7 million fine against GCU for allegedly misrepresenting the costs of doctoral programs. GCU has rejected these claims and is currently appealing.¹ Earlier this year, Liberty University was issued a record-setting Clery Act fine of \$14 million for allegedly failing to disclose information about crime on campus.² Additionally, ED has issued a \$6 million reimbursement request to Ashland University, the country's longest-serving provider of corrections education, for allegedly using an incorrect formula to determine the amount of the Pell Grant that each of the incarcerated students was entitled to receive.³ These are just a few of the significant actions ED has taken to undermine Christian institutions.

Recent fines ED has imposed for more serious allegations demonstrate that the fines against GCU, LU, and AU are disproportionately high. Specifically, Michigan State University (MSU) was fined \$4.5 million under the Clery Act for underreporting crimes of sexual abuse by former team doctor, Larry Nassar.⁴ It appears ED is weaponizing the federal government and making an example out of Liberty University.

¹ GCU News, *Grand Canyon University appeals unprecedented decision, record fine from U.S. Department of Education*, GCU News (Nov 16, 2023), <https://news.gcu.edu/gcu-news/grand-canyon-university-appeals-unprecedented-decision-record-fine-from-u-s-department-of-education/>

² Josh Moody, *Liberty University Fined \$14 million for Clery Violations*, INSIDE HIGHER ED (Mar 6, 2024), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/safety/2024/03/05/liberty-university-fined-14-million-clery-violations>

³ Katelyn Meeks, *Ashland University files complaint to the U.S. Department of Education*, THE COLLEGIAN (Oct 9, 2023), <https://ashland-collegian.com/16880/news/ashland-university-files-complaint-to-the-u-s-department-of-education/>

⁴ Jeremy Bauer-Wolf, *A Record Fine for Underreporting Sex Crimes*, INSIDE HIGHER ED (Sep 5, 2019), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/09/06/education-department-fines-michigan-state-45-million-not-reporting-nassar-crimes>

Moreover, at a hearing in April, Secretary Cardona openly discussed his desire to shut down GCU⁵, the largest Christian university in the U.S. Secretary Cardona's intention to shut down GCU and other private, Christian universities are demonstrated by his malevolent comments.

We request that the Education and Workforce Committee hold a hearing to thoroughly investigate ED's targeting of Christian universities and attempt to close them.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Bob Good
Member of Congress



Eli Crane
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko
Member of Congress

⁵ Joshua Q. Nelson, *Biden's education secretary vows to shut down the largest Christian university in US*, FOX NEWS, (Apr 18, 2024), <https://www.foxnews.com/media/bidens-education-secretary-vows-shut-largest-christian-university-us>